

# CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME

Welcome to the 26th edition of BCG's Season Research Results Compendium. As in previous years, this publication summarises much of the research conducted by our team and collaborators.

The 130 trials spread across 22 sites and 9500 plots ensure BCG remains committed to applied research outcomes for growers in the Mallee, Wimmera and North Central and to delivering relevant information to our members.

This year has been significant for many reasons: production has been exceptional in parts of the Southern Mallee, Wimmera and North Central Victoria. The Main Research Site, at Lachlan and Andrew Barber's farm at Karyrie, was the best I have ever seen and showcased to full effect at the Main Field Day in September.

Our compendium, packed with 24 articles, reflects this. It also includes information regarding frost, and the all-important variety analysis.

In addition, guest contributions have been made by Andrew Sommerville who offers an in-depth discussion about adjuvants, and Dr James Hunt on managing nitrogen fertiliser to profitably close yield gaps.

The number of member-generated trials increased to among the largest in recent years and I am pleased that reports on seven of them have been included in this compendium.

I'd also like to acknowledge some cropping regions in Australia were dealt heavy blows this year; while we enjoyed a decent harvest, farmers in parts of the Northern Mallee, New South Wales, Queensland and Western Australia unfortunately have not.

None of the research we do would be relevant if it wasn't communicated effectively via an extensive extension program of workshops, discussion groups, field days, crop walks and symposiums delivered independently or in partnership.

At the Chairman's breakfast in August, we welcomed Professor Kevin Folta from the Faculty of Horticulture at the University of Florida to Birchip to discuss the topic of 'Building Trust in a Post-Truth Era'. Prof Folta's advice for connecting effectively with the public was for agricultural producers to explain "why you do what you do, not what you do".

Equally, the Building Climate Resilience event in October, delivered in partnership with Buloke Shire Council and North Central and Mallee CMAs, focussed on the need for farmers to take charge of their own narratives. The event addressed some of the sobering realities of climate change but also shared uplifting stories of farming businesses, communities and industries where adaptation is already taking place.

This year's research and extension program was the last to be overseen by Chris Sounness, who finished as BCG CEO in August 2019. I thank Chris for his five years with BCG and his diligence in expanding our networks which has led to our involvement in a range of technology, social and environmental projects and related activities. More recently, Chris's influence was important in expanding our soils-based research and partnerships.

Caroline Welsh resigned as Chairman in February. Caroline's leadership over the past seven years has had a positive impact, not only on BCG, but on the wider agricultural community and I am pleased she will continue as a farmer member of the board.

In other changes, we farewelled board member Dr Zvi Hochman, CSIRO, after six years of service, and staff members Ciara Cullen and Jemma Pearl. We welcomed Amy Harwood, Angela Mazur, Kate Finger and Phillip Guthrie to the BCG staff team.

It was also a year of firsts: I became Chairman of the board and we were delighted to appoint a new CEO, Fiona Best, in November.

I thank BCG staff for continuing to produce quality research and extension in 2019 and for delivering an exceptional research program that keeps our work locally relevant and at the cutting edge of Australian agriculture.

Thank you to our site hosts and the members, partners, researchers and collaborators who make this publication such a valuable source of applied, science-based research and extension that not only represents value to growers and agronomic advisors, but the wider industry.

2020 brings great opportunities for BCG and agriculture in general, and with new leadership comes fresh perspectives and possibilities. We look forward to delivering even more value to you.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John Ferrier', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

**John Ferrier**  
Chair